

## **New talking posters to tackle chronic cough in Indigenous communities**

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The launch of a series of flipcharts and talking posters will help to address factors that lead to chronic respiratory illness in remote Indigenous children and adults.

The Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) has developed a suite of child and adult respiratory flipcharts and talking posters for Indigenous families and health professionals working in remote communities.

In the Northern Territory, respiratory illness is the most frequent reason for hospitalisation of young children under five years and preventable cause of death of Indigenous infants (five times that of non-Indigenous infants). Respiratory illnesses include bronchiolitis, pneumonia, chronic lung disease and bronchiectasis.

Head of Menzies' respiratory program, Gabrielle McCallum said nationally and internationally, the burden of ill health from acute and chronic respiratory disease remains high in Indigenous populations

"It is concerning to see cough normalised among Indigenous communities. Cough is the most common symptom of respiratory disease and continues to be poorly identified among families, often resulting in delayed diagnosis and treatment," she said.

Ms McCallum said delayed presentation can increase the risk of progressed lung damage and development of chronic lung disease.

"We knew from Menzies research conducted in 2007 that respiratory disease was extensive and there was a lack of culturally appropriate educational resources for health professionals and families, so that's why we developed the flipcharts and talking posters," she said.

"The flipcharts use illustrations and simple messages to outline the disease, symptoms and treatments. The talking posters include cough, smoking and hygiene. This technology allows health messages to be delivered in audio format by pressing buttons on the poster.

"Health messages are spoken in both English and local language and have provided a fun and interactive way of delivering important health information. The posters can be modified to be language specific to different regions.

"These flipcharts and talking posters are great resources. We want to get them out into communities and into the hands of families and health professionals to help raise the awareness of respiratory illness and reduce disease progression."

Ms McCallum said the next step was to develop the resources into a range of Indigenous dialects tailored for specific communities.

Menzies has developed the flipcharts in collaboration with The Australian Lung Foundation, Indigenous Respiratory Outreach Centre – Queensland Health, Asthma Foundation Northern Territory, Australian Respiratory Council and Menzies' Indigenous Reference Group

Hard copies of the paediatric and adult respiratory flipcharts can be ordered through the Menzies homepage [www.menzies.edu.au/RespiratoryFlipcharts](http://www.menzies.edu.au/RespiratoryFlipcharts). PDF versions of the resources are also available for download.

To order talking posters, contact the respiratory healthy group via email at: [lunginfont@menzies.edu.au](mailto:lunginfont@menzies.edu.au)

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**Background:** Menzies School of Health Research is a national leader in Indigenous and tropical health research. It is the only medical research institute in the Northern Territory, with more than 300 staff working in over 60 communities across central and northern Australia, as well as developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Menzies is also a significant contributor to health education and research training.